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SALES & MARKETING MANAGEMENT

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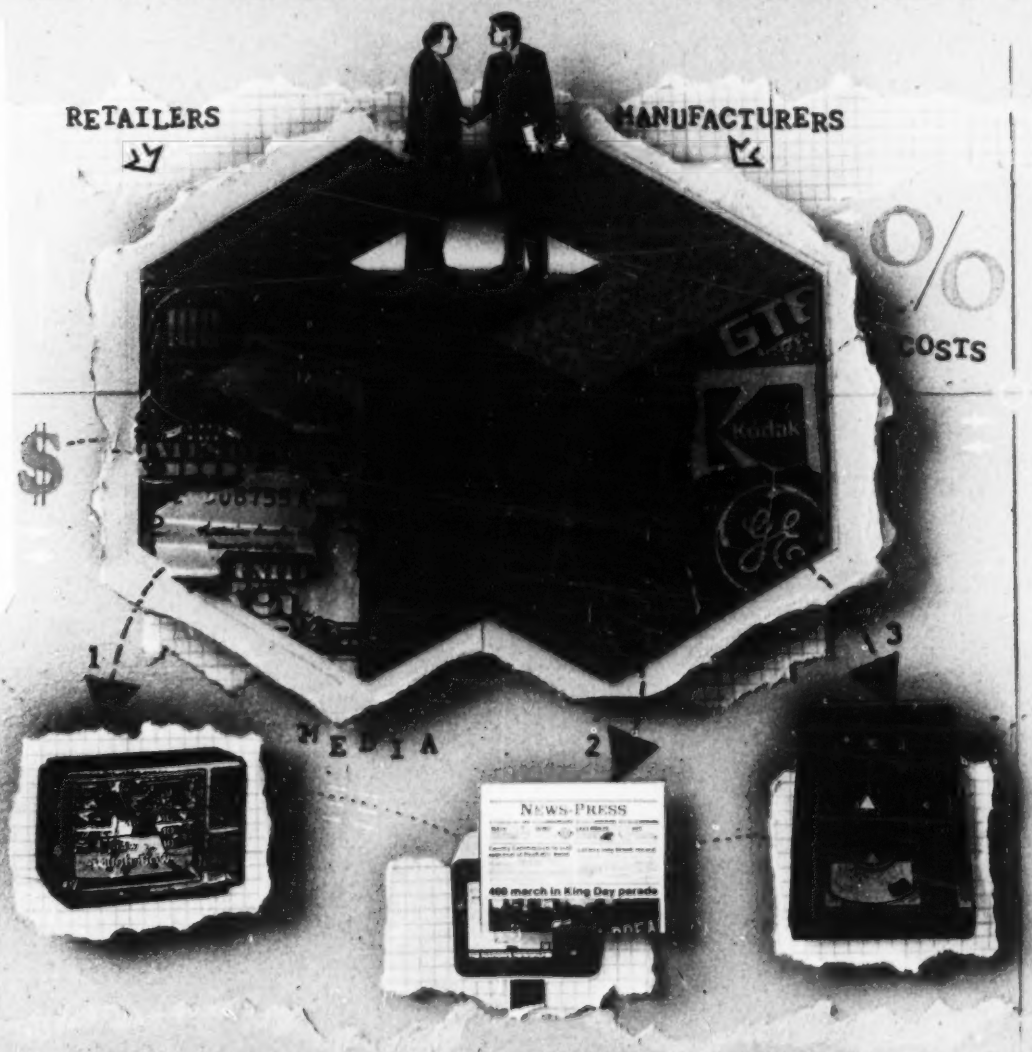
THE ART OF CO-OP
NEW DIRECTIONS IN MIXED MEDIA



RECRUITING The Secret to a Good Hire: Profiling

PERFORMANCE Delegated Assignments—How to Cope

STRATEGIES Just-In-Time Isn't Just for Show—It Sells

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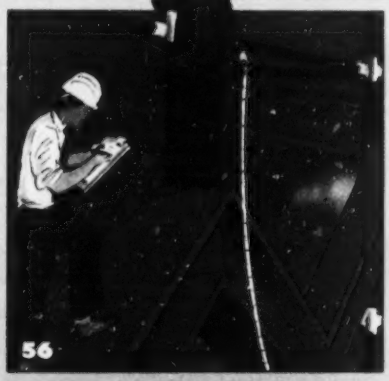
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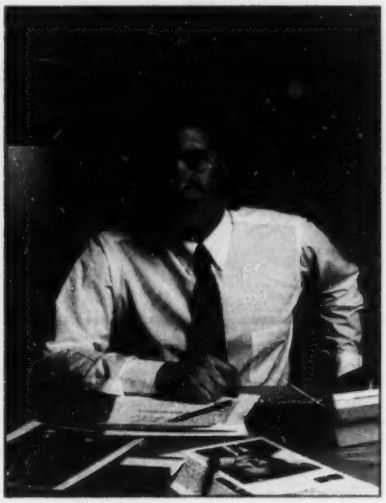
ABP

THE RACE

ONCE UPON A TIME



Back when I was in college (and hence knew everything about everything), I was sitting around one day having a heated discussion about something or other (as college students are wont to do) when I arrived at what I then considered to be the ultimate insight into the human condition.

"The way I see it," I said, "the world's population is divided into two basic types—artists and salespeople. No matter who you are or what you do, you're either one or the other. Some people are just naturally creative and others are born salesmen."

Sound overly simplistic? Of course it does. But remember that when I made this statement, I had yet to venture into the real world to make a living. And, as you might already have guessed, at the time I considered myself to be firmly entrenched on the artist's side of my imaginary dividing line. Being a fine arts major, I automatically assumed that I would one day end up as a world-renowned painter or photographer—or, at the very least, an art historian at a major museum or university. After all, I was an artist. That's what artists did.

What I actually did after I graduated was sell sporting goods. Then records. Then art supplies. And over the next few years, a funny thing happened. The more contact I had with salespeople, the more I began to realize that selling is very much an art, something that requires the same kind of creative talents that I had exclusively (and erroneously) assigned to artists and other "naturally creative" types. At the same time, I noticed that many of my art school friends were becoming more and more salesman-like, honing their skills of self-promotion and marketing in order to gain a foothold in the dog-eat-dog world of professional (read: profitable) art.

Now, roughly 20 years later, I find myself editing a magazine targeted to those I once thought of as the antithesis of artistic. Fortunately, I've learned a lot since then, and by way of atoning for my past sins (at least in this particular area), let me just say that I was young and inexperienced and didn't know any better. I'm sorry. I was wrong. Forgive me.

Artists are very definitely salespeople. And by the same token, selling is also an art. Certainly, most of you know this better than I do, since you're out there every day proving it to yourselves and your customers. You know that creativity, craft, and meticulous attention to detail are what sets you apart from someone who merely fills orders. Your ability to fulfill the dreams and desires of your customers is what makes you special, and we at *Sales & Marketing Management* are keenly aware of that. That's why we make it our mission to provide you with the information and inspiration that will help you do your job more effectively and make you feel good about it at the same time.

After all, we're all salespeople in one way or another. Even those of us who might have thought we were something else, once upon a time.

COMPUTERS

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL: MAKING LAPTOPS EASIER TO LOVE

BY THAYER C. TAYLOR,
SENIOR EDITOR

A new breed of downsized portable computers is making totable PCs extra attractive to salespeople who want to take them on the road. Catching the attention of many of the 115,000-plus aisle walkers at the recent Comdex/Fall in Las Vegas, the PC industry's annual showcase for new products, were several "lite" style notebook- and pocket-size models, as well as a laptop that reads handwriting—eliminating the keyboard that's the bane of many salespeople.

The notebook category (under 8 lbs.) became a new PC market niche two years ago when NEC Technologies' UltraLite (4.2 lbs., $2,499 base price) debuted, followed by Zenith Data Systems' MinisPort (6.3 lbs., $1,999). However, they suffered the usual drawbacks that often go with technological firsts: Short battery life (1.5 hours) and an unconventional keyboard plagued the UltraLite, and nonstandard storage media (2-inch floppy) and a dimly lit display didn't help the MinisPort.

Compaq Computer legitimized the new market niche late last year with its Compaq LTE (7.2 lbs., $2,399), bringing desktop power to the new class of "lite" laptops at a competitive price. Its features included a hard drive (20MB and 40MB versions), a bright screen, and expansion slots for a modem and peripherals. The hard drive should appeal to on-the-go salespeople who have to wrestle with large databases as well as spreadsheets for preparing sales forecasts.

The new breed of mighty mites became still more attractive when Toshiba America trotted out an even lighter machine, the 6-lb. T1000SE, at a sharply competitive $1,699 price that has NEC and Zenith scrambling to upgrade their now overpriced machines. Furthermore, in addition to a standard 1.4MB floppy drive, the T1000SE sports a screen with the highest resolution (640 × 400 pixels) in the new laptop segment, making it suitable for take-it-with-you presentations.

Those who find even Toshiba's very low price point too rich can consider Tandy's 1100FD (6.4 lbs., $999), the latest notebook-size laptop, which has a 3.5-inch floppy disk drive. Panasonic makes the Tandy machine and is marketing a 5.5-lb. version under its own name at the same price.

Currently, the notebook-sized laptops head the PC industry's hit parade and both Compaq and Toshiba are hard-pressed to meet the explosive demand. An estimated 250,000 notebook-sized laptops will be shipped this year, more than quadruple last year's volume, and shipments are expected to more than double next year.

Just when these units gave new meaning to the "small is beautiful" idea, along comes Poqet Computer with its palm-top, a 1.8-lb., $1,995 computer the size of a videocassette that, the company claims, runs on standard AA batteries for up to 100 hours. The size is achieved by a limited memory (128K) and software that is "burned in" to credit-card-sized ROM (read-only memory) cards. A competitive but stripped-down palm-top, Atari's Portfolio ($400), also debuted. Observers still give Poqet the edge, however, because of its greater features, including a better screen and keyboard.

Of course, hand-held computers have been around for some time, but they've been limited-purpose machines, mostly used for taking inventory in retail stores and warehouses. The new breed, in addition to running popular software, is seen as especially viable for automating a sales rep's personal management routines, such as schedulers, address books, and telephone directories. Whether they'll shuck off the novelty image and become serious business tools is an open question.

Salespeople who have shied away from laptops because of their complexity or their own keyboard-phobia no longer have that excuse, thanks to Grid Systems' GridPad ($2,400). Using an electronic pen, the salesperson writes on the GridPad screen; built-in software reads the hand-printed text and data. Company president Alan Lefkof says the software will be customized for each client so that forms used for taking orders, for example, will pop up on the screen and the salesperson will only have to fill in words or numbers. Based on sales for its first six months, Lefkof predicts that "pen interface computers will be one of the fastest-growing segments of the computer market." ▶

CHRIS KOPE